

Nina Jacobs
Brookfield, CT 06804

March 1, 2016

Regarding: 8-30g and HB 5363

Dear Housing Committee,

I am here today to voice my strong opposition to the 8-30g law. I'm asking you to please eliminate this extremely damaging law. There is a proposal by an outside developer, whose money-driven plan of a (now) 7 story apartment complex, is threatening to forever ruin our town of Brookfield.

I do not believe this law was put into place to be used to completely bypass our town's own plans and zoning regulations, and railroad Brookfield with a wildly inappropriate 7 story apartment complex near our small town center, where Brookfield's zoning regulations limit the height of buildings to 3 stories. Our town officials have worked tirelessly for years, spending millions already, on a new Revitalization Plan, only to have this horrific inappropriate application forced so recklessly upon us, with absolutely no regard to the town's people, health, safety, plummeting property values and overcrowded school classrooms. The serious damage to Brookfield, on every level, would be far-reaching and permanent. Please keep in mind Brookfield is a small town, not an urban city.

Let me be quite clear, this is not about affordable housing, as all our town officials have also stated. It is about what is appropriate for the scale of our town and its safe development for the future.

I would like to point out the following health and safety concerns this application poses:

1. Our town's police department is stretched to capacity. Brookfield's volunteer fire department is not equipped to deal with possible emergencies in a 156 unit, 7 story apartment complex. Many experts from CT have spoken to the reality that it would put our town's firefighters in extreme danger. The answer is not to buy more equipment and larger firetrucks, begin salaried pay, hire many more firefighters and provide high-level training on an on-going basis, etc. etc. etc., putting Brookfield on an urban/city-size scale. Why should the plan of a greedy developer, using 8-30g for his financial benefit, dictate that our small town make extremely costly changes in order to accommodate the fallout of a bad law? Our firefighters and policemen deserve to be in a safe, appropriately-equipped town, which they are now. That should not have to change drastically. Nor can our town afford that kind of change! Most importantly, the lives of all of our police, firefighters, EMS, and first responders should remain a priority. 8-30g would not allow that.

Regarding Danbury's fire department helping Brookfield: Danbury already does help Brookfield as backup. How long does it take Danbury's firefighters to get to Brookfield? In a perfect scenario...about 10 minutes. (I've driven these roads for 26 years!) However, the Four Corners is near Costco, Stew Leonard's, B.J.s, several big furniture stores, and countless other retail stores that cause incredible traffic on almost any weekend, during rush hours, and especially during pre- and post-holidays...not to mention the nightmare of travel during snowstorms, black icy winter roads, any storms, and fog. This is New England, and weather is often an issue year round. Of course Danbury would try their hardest, but the result of a 7 story housing project on fire could easily be catastrophic.

2. Another safety issue is major traffic on Federal Road and nearby intersections in the area. They would indeed become overwhelmed. The developer's "expert" has done a study concluding

that it would not be a problem. It hasn't even happened yet, so his conclusion is 100% pure sugar-coated conjecture. We residents, who drive these roads daily, know otherwise. The added traffic would create hazards with school buses, rush hours, winter weather and everyday life. Again, several brand new housing developments near the proposed site, have not even been rented out yet. We have yet to see the impact of the many families with children from those units. We have small town roads, as we should, because we are a small town. 8-30g would allow traffic to become unmanageable. Safety on our town's roads should be a priority.

3. Pollution and erosion to the Still River. Also, the sewers, snowmelt, erosion, flood plans,... are all serious issues. (Amazingly, their "experts" state there would be no problems. It's all conjecture. Plus, some of their data differs greatly from Brookfield's.)
4. A 7 story apartment complex built right next to a 6-7 story cell/power lines tower. EMFs are greatest at the top, which would be directly next to the upper floors of the complex, resulting in long-term exposure and serious health risks. Residents deserve a safe, healthy environment. 8-30g allows the developer to ignore this danger.
5. Property values would absolutely plummet, as Brookfield would no longer be a town that attracts people, but instead, would drive them away. NOT because of a huge complex with "affordable housing" but because it's extremely inappropriate and does not add to any desirable plan/vision for Brookfield. Watching our town's property values decrease would cause significant stress.

The developer hired a panel of lawyers, who descended on our little town. They've been working for 9 months trying to make 8-30g work for the developer's profit, and force this plan on a town that is extremely opposed to it, for all the above reasons. It is not right.

Housing Committee: We need you to do what is right. We need your help and we need it now. Deadlines are looming. 8-30g is riddled with serious problems! Please eliminate 8-30g so it will not irreparably hurt Brookfield or other precious towns in Connecticut.

Thank you for your help, your time, and your careful consideration with this critical issue.